THIS SPACE FOR WRITING MESSAGES

5 ways to protect your home using Folklore

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Thank you for downloading this guide to protecting your home using folklore! It goes without saying that there's no substitute for burglar alarms, security cameras, or good old-fashioned neighbourhood watch schemes.

But there's a lot to be said for the Old Ways and the things we can learn! So pop the kettle on and put your feet up, and learn five ways you can use things from folklore to protect your home.

Enjoy!

P.S. If you didn't get this PDF from me, you can sign up to get weekly (or monthly) emails whenever a blog post and podcast episode goes live!

Check out http://www.icysedgwick.com/fab-folklore/ for more information! (And yep, that link is totally clickable...)

1. Hang a Horseshoe or a Broomstick

You may have noticed horseshoes hanging above doorways, particularly in country pubs. As they're made from iron, they're a good way to deter fairies from entering your house.

Hang them points 'up' to stop the good luck running out.

The belief in the protective power of horseshoes dates back to St Dunstan in the 10th century. Before he became a saint, he was a blacksmith, and the Devil stopped by for a visit. He asked for a horseshoe for his horse, only Dunstan grabbed the Devil's hoof and nailed the shoe to that, not his horse. The process of having it fitted caused the Devil a lot of pain. He begged Dunstan to get rid of it, so Dunstan made a deal with him. He'd remove it, but only if the Devil stayed out of any building where a horseshoe hung above the door.

Some people even nailed horseshoes onto the lids of witch's coffins to keep them in their grave!

Speaking of witches, consider buying a broomstick for your home. Don't be tempted by a second-hand one - make sure you buy a brand new one. They can accumulate negativity when they're used, so you don't want to bring someone else's negativity into your house.

So how can you use a broomstick to protect your home and family?

- Cross a broomstick and a spade outside your front door to protect against lightning strikes.
- Put a small broom under the pillows of children to protect them while they sleep.
- Hang a broomstick on the bedroom door to sweep away nightmares.
- Cross two brooms and hang them on the door to guard the house.
- Put a broomstick across a doorway if you want to speak to the dearly departed. They'll be able to communicate as long as you leave the broom where it is.
- Lay a broom across the doorway to keep evil out (which helps with the point above).

2. Witch Bottles

People usually find witch bottles buried under the hearth or hidden inside a chimney. So they're often found during remodelling work. Some commentators think homeowners intended to protect their houses with these bottles. The same goes for bottles buried at the edge of their property.

Bottles were often made of ceramic material or glass, and they might contain fingernail clippings, hair, or even urine. I've come across stories of bottles that also contained thorns, red thread, broken glass, nails and pins.

Some people think the witch bottle protected the whole property if buried outside. Witch bottles attracted negative energies and trapped them – much like leaving out a bottle of beer to attract wasps. By burying them beneath the doorstep, you're not likely to disturb the bottles.

Plus, doorways act as the most likely point of entry for any negative spirits.

Make a modern version by adding rosemary, needles, and pins to a small jar, reciting the following as you do so;

Pins, needles, rosemary, wine;
In this witches bottle of mine.
Guard against harm and enmity;
This is my will, so mote it be!

Next, fill the jar with red wine.

Seal the jar using red or black candle wax. Just drip the melted wax from a lit candle and let it set. Either bury the jar at the edge of your property or hide it somewhere in the house. The thinking behind the bottle is that the pins and needles impale evil, the wine drowns it, and the rosemary sends it on its way.

3. Plant the Right Trees

You've got a choice of trees to plant if you want to protect your home. The yew is a great place to start. Many people are put off by the fact it's poisonous, but the trees protect houses, so it's bad luck to cut one down. In Spain, people hung the branches from balconies to protect against lightning. If you mingle the branches with roof thatch, they're supposed to guard against fire according to a belief in the Hebrides.

If you're keen to keep witches away (though really, why would you be?), plant a rowan tree in your garden. The witches of folklore can't stand being anywhere near rowan wood. The trees also work as protection against demons, which is why you often find them in churchyards. In North Yorkshire, builders used to make the side supports for fireplaces from rowan to stop witches coming down the chimney. Scottish builders used rowan wood for the chimney cross beams but the effect was much the same.

Or plant a holly bush beneath your windows. Not only will this stop anything evil getting in, it also makes it less likely anyone will try and climb through that window. Holly is notoriously unfriendly, though it does provide shelter for local fairies. The berries are also a food source for birds in the winter, so they're doubly helpful.

4. Mirrors

Some people hang mirrors opposite their front door. It acts as a form of watchdog, reflecting any evil spirits that try to enter. The practice comes from China, where people hung brass mirrors in temples. Evil spirits trying to enter saw their reflections and left in a hurry.

It's also an old custom to cover mirrors following a death in the house. Some people think it's to ensure the deceased's spirit doesn't become trapped in a mirror. Others think it's to stop the spirit getting confused trying to leave the house.

And if you're worried evil entities can access your home through a mirror? Draw protective symbols on the back of your mirrors. That stops evil forces using them for nefarious purposes.

Many people think breaking a mirror kicks off seven years of bad luck. The more prosaic explanation is down to the high cost of mirrors. The 'bad luck' is how long it would take to save up to buy a new one in bygone years. Nowadays,

they're just a faff to clean up.

But if you break a magic mirror? No harm, no foul! Collect the bits and put them in a jar, dust and all. Put it on your windowsill (pick somewhere sunny) and let it reflect negative energies away from your house.

There are various methods for making magic mirrors. The most common one involves leaving a mirror out under moonlight overnight. Sprinkle a magical infusion of cold mugwort tea over the surface. Mugwort is a herb traditionally used to help boost psychic powers so it's a good choice here. Keep it covered when not in use.

5. Protection Spells

We've already discussed the power of plants and trees to protect your property. These tend to guard against negative energies rather than people. A good old-fashioned burglar alarm is probably better for the latter!

But one time of year when you may want a little more 'oomph' in your property protection is Halloween. For some, putting a candle in a pumpkin is a way to guide your loved ones home for Samhain. For others, it's a way of repelling other spirits that you don't want dropping by unannounced.

If this is something you'd like to try, carve your pumpkins and choose where to put them outside. If you live in an apartment, you might put them on a windowsill or a balcony. Wait until dusk and light the candles.

As you light the candles inside the pumpkins, recite this charm;

Pumpkin, please protect my home,
From roof tile down to founding stone,
Windows, doors, and all between,
Guard this place on Halloween.

When you've lit all the candles, finish the charm by saying;

This spell protects my home and me,
As I will it, so must it be.

If the candles are indoors, remember to put them out before you go to bed. Remove the candles the next day and leave the pumpkins for local wildlife! Or pop them on your compost heap.